

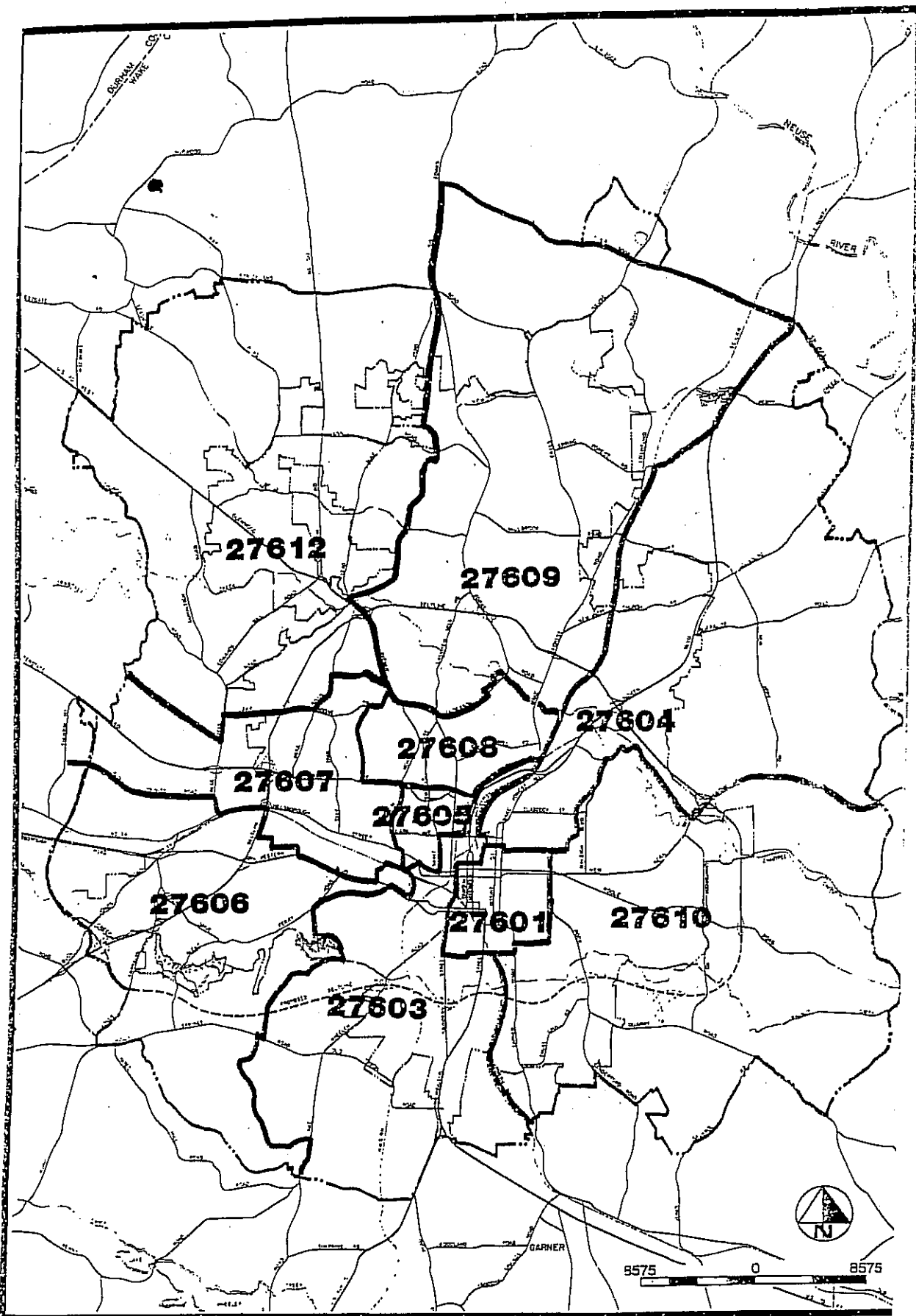
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**you can  
help**

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE  
QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT

Prepared by

THE CITY OF RALEIGH APPEARANCE COMMISSION  
AND  
THE CITY OF RALEIGH PLANNING DEPARTMENT





## Appearance Commission

Raleigh, as the Capital City, has traditionally been concerned with its municipal appearance. Within the last several years, Raleigh has experienced growth beyond the expectations of most Raleigh citizens. Accompanying this rapid growth are many factors both positive and negative affecting the appearance of our City.

The Raleigh Appearance Commission is a group of fifteen Raleigh citizens who have been appointed by the City Council to study the visual aspects of the City and to make plans and carry out programs which will enhance and improve the visual quality and aesthetic characteristics of Raleigh. One part of this program, presently underway, is a City Wide Appearance Project which will identify the positive and negative appearance issues affecting Raleigh. The Appearance Commission has identified many of the issues which it believes affects City appearance. Through the responses to the Community Appearance Questionnaire, the issues of importance to many citizens of Raleigh have been made known.

### BACKGROUND

During the months of November and December, 1982, more than 40,000 Community Appearance Questionnaires were distributed in the City water bills to households in Raleigh. During December, 1982, and January, 1983, 1,890 households responded to this questionnaire. A summary of the results from these responses are reflected in this report.

### PREVIEW

The following is a list of significant results which are drawn from the responses to the Community Appearance Questionnaire.

1. The rate of response for the Community Appearance Questionnaire (about 4.5%) was good, especially when the fact is considered that return postage was paid by those households responding.
2. The 1,111 respondents who expressed their desire to be on an Appearance Commission mailing list is a significant percentage of the total respondents.
3. Throughout the City, 2 of every 3 respondents believe that Raleigh is an attractive city. The geographic location of the respondent was not highly significant.
4. The responses were divided into thirds concerning whether Raleigh has become more attractive, remained the same or less attractive during the last five years.

### APPEARANCE COMMISSION PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

The following is an analysis of the significant results which are drawn from the responses to the Community Appearance Questionnaire.

A substantial number of Raleigh residents are interested in a good City Appearance. Many of these persons expressed an interest in participating in future Appearance Commission programs and may serve as a solid base of support both in terms of raising contributions and volunteer services.

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the respondents answered that Raleigh is an attractive City and only 2.3% believe it is not, indicating a positive attitude toward Raleigh among its residents. The near 33% of respondents who feel that Raleigh needs improvement is a surprisingly low figure in light of the large number of respondents who rated specific areas poor (see items 5 and 6).

Throughout the City there is a mixture of good, fair, and poor areas in terms of appearance. The following responses define these areas more clearly.

The overwhelmingly poor rating of many of these thoroughfares indicates that there is a great need for improvement of the appearance of these thoroughfares. A preliminary analysis of the character of these thoroughfares is as follows:

#### Character of Thoroughfares Rated Good

- Glenwood Avenue (inside Beltline) and Wade Avenue are both primarily residential with segments of office uses.
- The Beltline has a mixture of all uses but in many areas retains much of its green buffer.
- The majority of offices and businesses along Glenwood and Wade Avenues are well maintained and landscaped.
- All three streets have well established vegetation and tree cover along the thoroughfares. Glenwood Avenue has a landscaped median.
- The signs and billboards along these areas are limited.

#### Character of Thoroughfares Rated Bad

- Garner and Poole Roads are primarily residential with other mixed sections of non-residential uses such as Industrial-I and II, Shopping Center, Neighborhood Business, etc. Garner Road has a larger section of Industrial-II land.
- Downtown Boulevard is almost totally industrially zoned with large amounts of Industrial-II land which allows development with no setback from the thoroughfare.
- South Saunders Street has large sections of Industrial land which is primarily Industrial-II, sections of Neighborhood Business and small amount of residential land.
- Many of the businesses along these thoroughfares are poorly maintained and have little landscaping.

#### - Thoroughfares Rated Good -

- Wade Avenue - 72% good
- Glenwood Avenue (inside Beltline) - 58% good
- Raleigh Beltline - 58% good

#### - Thoroughfares Rated Poor -

- South Saunders Street - 95% poor
- Downtown Boulevard - 92% poor
- Garner Road - 92% poor
- Poole Road - 91% poor

These thoroughfares have little landscaping and tree cover. The State's landscaping of the segment of South Saunders Street has been well received and improves the appearance of that segment.

Many signs and billboards are located along Downtown Boulevard and South Saunders Street. Downtown Boulevard has the highest concentration of billboards in the City, and many are non-conforming with present City ordinances.

This analysis of visual character should be used as a guideline in determining and defining the types of programs which will be necessary to improve the appearance of Raleigh's major entrance ways.

The rating of the 17 categories of areas were more wide ranging and less clear cut than the rating of the 19 thoroughfares. A preliminary analysis of the areas rated good and poor is as follows:

#### Areas Rated Good

- These areas tend to be well maintained and landscaped.
- The residential and non-residential areas which are rated well are areas where similar land uses are clustered together.

#### Areas Rated Poor

- Many of the land uses in this area tend to be poorly maintained and landscaped.
- The character of the land uses in these areas are mixed in the sense that there are different land uses and zoning categories mixed within a given area.
- Parking areas received a poor rating overall. Many of these parking areas tend to have expanses of concrete and asphalt with little interior landscaping. Other qualities of the parking areas are mixed, in the sense that some have clear delineation of spaces and aisles, good perimeter and interior landscaping, well prepared surfaces, and unobtrusive lighting. Other parking lots have none or few of these good qualities.
- It should be noted that even though the "Surrounding Downtown" area received a poor rating, a majority of the respondents from the Downtown area indicated that during the last five years, this area has become more attractive, indicating positive support for the programs presently being undertaken in the Downtown area.

The responses to this question indicate that there is a need for further study and progressive programs which will improve the areas which receive such poor ratings.

5. When respondents rated the attractiveness of 17 categories of areas, 5 areas were rated good by 63% or more of the respondents. Of the remaining 11 areas, 7 areas were rated fair, needs improvement to bad by 61% or more of the respondents. Of the 7 areas rating poorly, 4 were types of parking lots.

#### - Areas Rating Good -

- Fayetteville Street Mall - 81% good
- Office Parks - 76% good
- State Government Complex - 74% good
- Single-Family Residential Areas - 74% good
- Respondents' Own Neighborhood - 69% good
- Industrial Parks - 63% good

#### - Areas Rating Poor -

- Downtown Area (excluding Fayetteville Street Mall and State Government Complex) - 91% poor
- Downtown Parking Lots - 90% poor
- Highway Strip Development - 72% poor
- Multi-Family Residential Parking Lots - 69% poor
- Shopping Mall Parking Lots - 64% poor
- Shopping Center Parking Lots - 64% poor
- Mixed Single-Family/Multi-Family Areas - 61% poor

7. When respondents were asked to rate their own residential neighborhood, all areas, with only two exceptions were rated good by 54% or more of the respondents. The two areas rated fair, needs improvement to bad by respondents were: the Southwest (17603) Area - 70% poor; and the Downtown (27601) Area - 63% poor.

A large number of Raleigh citizens are pleased with the attractiveness of the area in which they live. Almost one-third of the respondents felt that their area is poor, and in some areas there was an even greater percentage of respondents who feel that their neighborhood was not so attractive. Programs to improve the housing in the Central City and South areas are presently active. Appearance oriented programs are needed in all neighborhoods and in the Central and South areas in particular.

8. The Appearance Commission identified 9 programs that the Commission felt would improve Raleigh's appearance. Of the 9 programs, 7 received support from 60% or more of the respondents:

- Yearly Street Tree Planting Program - 61%
- Yearly Street Tree Maintenance Program - 65%
- Protecting existing trees during new construction - 75%
- Improved buffering between residential and non-residential areas - 72%
- Improved landscaping and maintenance for commercially developed property - 60%
- Reducing the number of and size of billboards - 71%
- Improved commercial sign controls - 66%

\*Of these 7 programs, note that 3 programs received support from 71% or more of the respondents (the billboard item had the highest emphasis of support with 91% of the respondents indicating special emphasis of support for this item).

The Appearance Commission believes that these programs will begin to improve the appearance problems which are outlined in the responses to this questionnaire. The overall support of these programs by the respondents indicates that the citizens of Raleigh are very receptive and ready for the implementation of programs such as these which will improve the appearance of Raleigh.

9. When respondents were asked to list their greatest concern about the appearance of Raleigh, 82% of all persons responding to the questionnaire listed their major concerns. Many of the greatest concern responses were similar in concept and were placed into eight categories. These categories were:

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Commercial Development | Traffic             |
| Growth and Planning    | Clutter Along Roads |
| Landscaping            | Urban Decline       |
| Maintenance            | Other               |

The two most often repeated issues were Growth and Planning issues and problems with certain types of Commercial Development. These issues were listed by 1 in every 2.7 respondents.

The large number of respondents to this question indicates the concern which citizens of Raleigh have for their City. These citizens expressed definite ideas as to what affects the appearance of Raleigh.

In this question no guidelines or categories were given and the respondents were not led to answer in a particular way. Because of the lack of guidance in this question, it is significant that many respondents listed items which were so similar in concept and category.

These concerns about appearance certainly deserve further study and programs to integrate them into City policies and procedures. Several of these categories were not included on the Appearance Commission's list of nine programs. A few of these other issues, such as Growth and Planning, Commercial Development, and Traffic, deserve further study to show how current planning and development code regulations affect City appearance.

**you can  
—help—**

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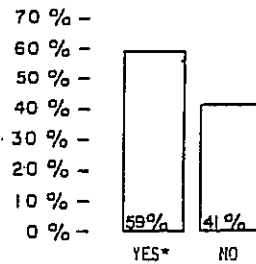
**YOU CAN  
HELP**

I am concerned about Raleigh's Appearance and would like to be included on the Appearance Commission mailing list.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

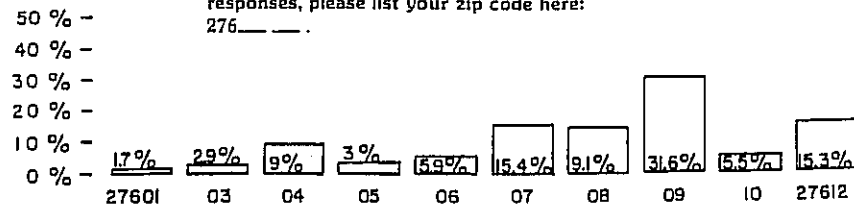
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_



\*1113 RESPONDENTS REQUESTED  
TO BE ON THE MAILING LIST  
(TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS-1890)

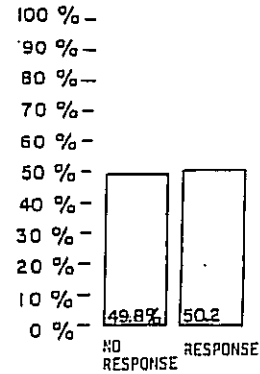
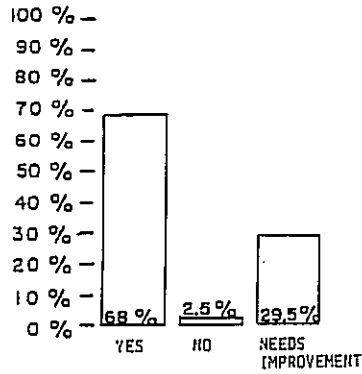
For purpose of categorizing questionnaire responses, please list your zip code here:  
276\_\_\_\_.



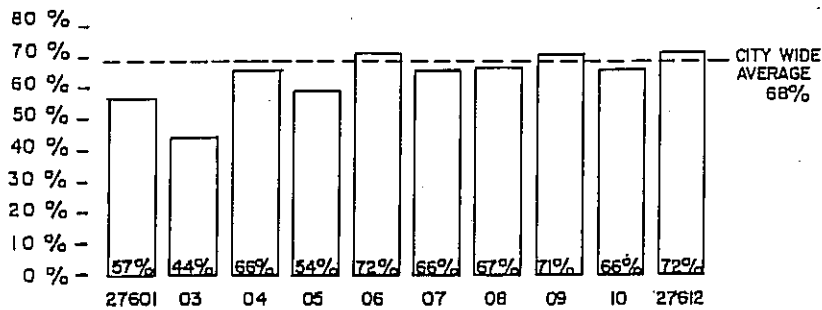
1. Do you consider Raleigh an attractive city?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Needs Improvement \_\_\_\_

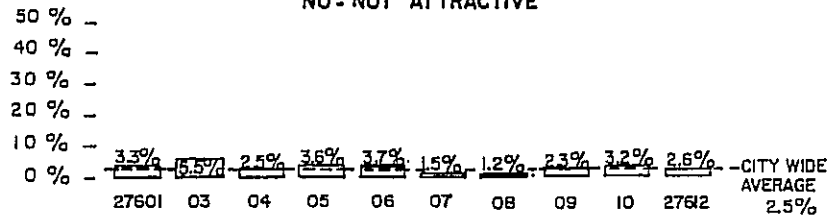
Why? \_\_\_\_\_



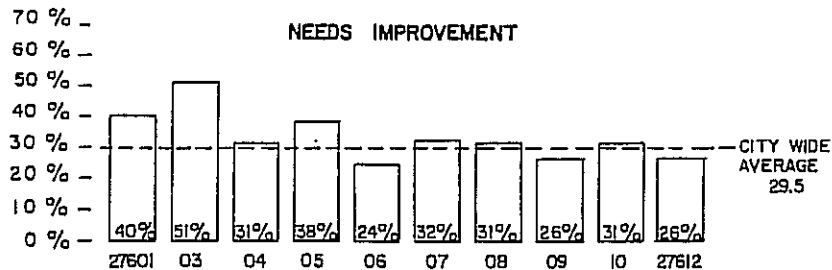
YES - ATTRACTIVE



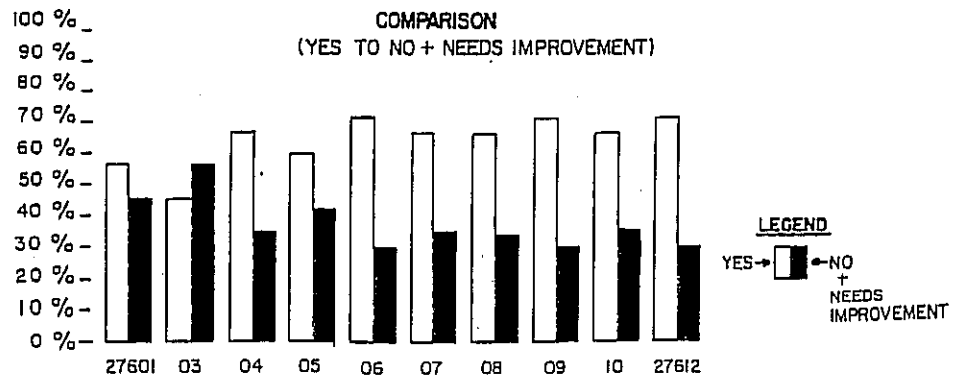
NO - NOT ATTRACTIVE

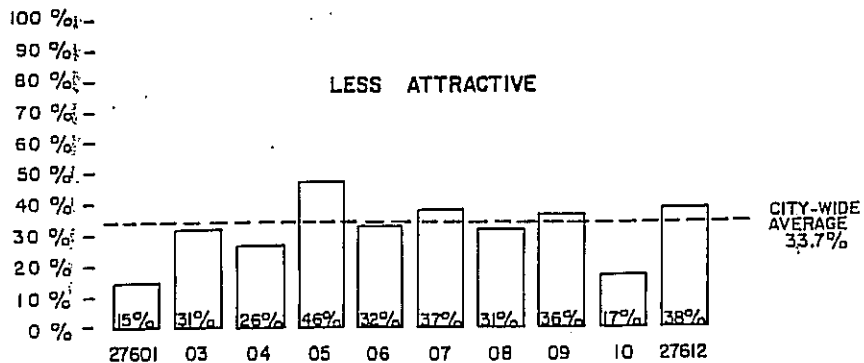
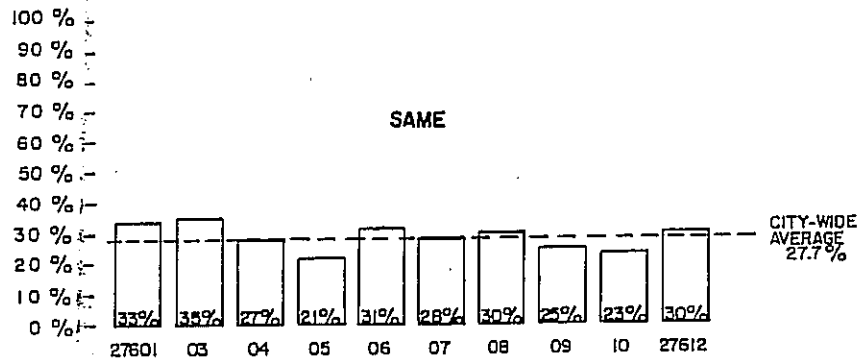
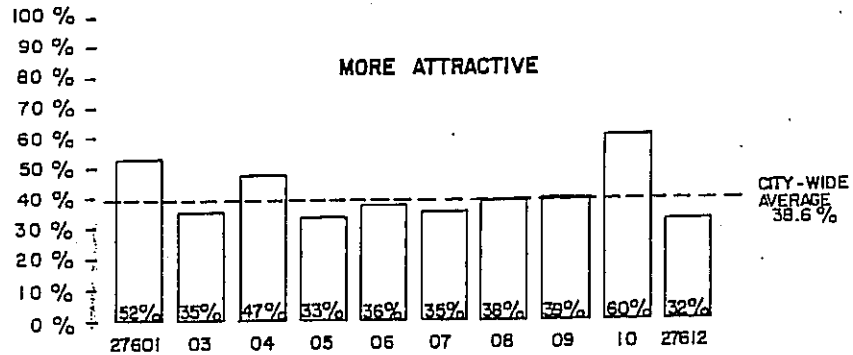
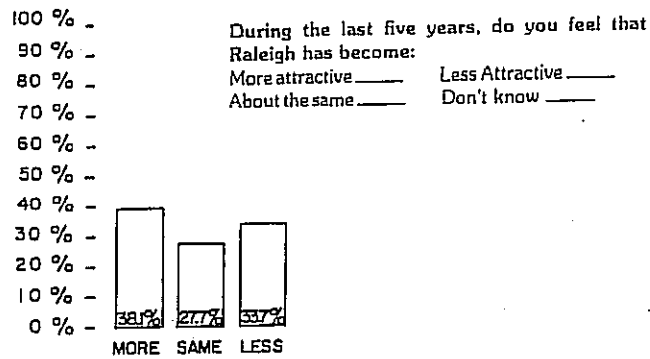


NEEDS IMPROVEMENT



COMPARISON  
(YES TO NO + NEEDS IMPROVEMENT)

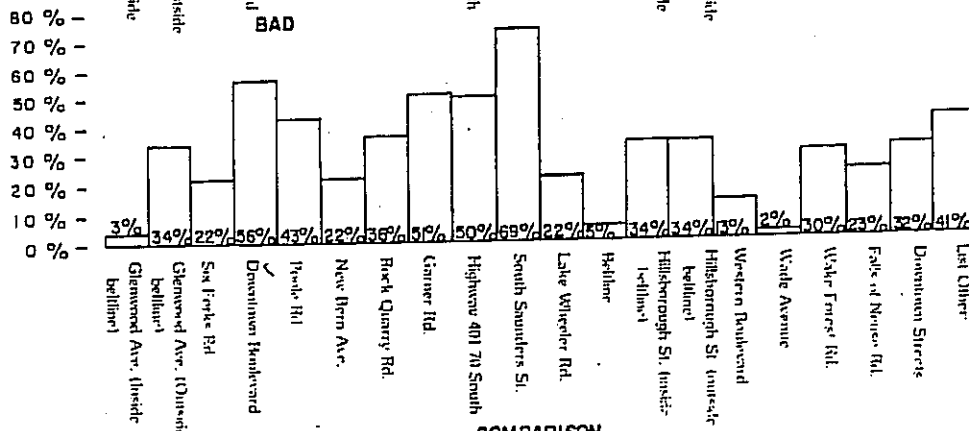
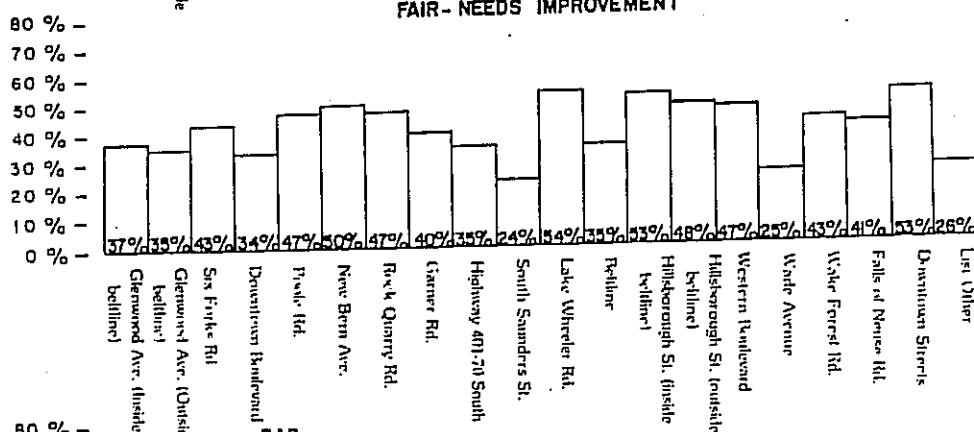
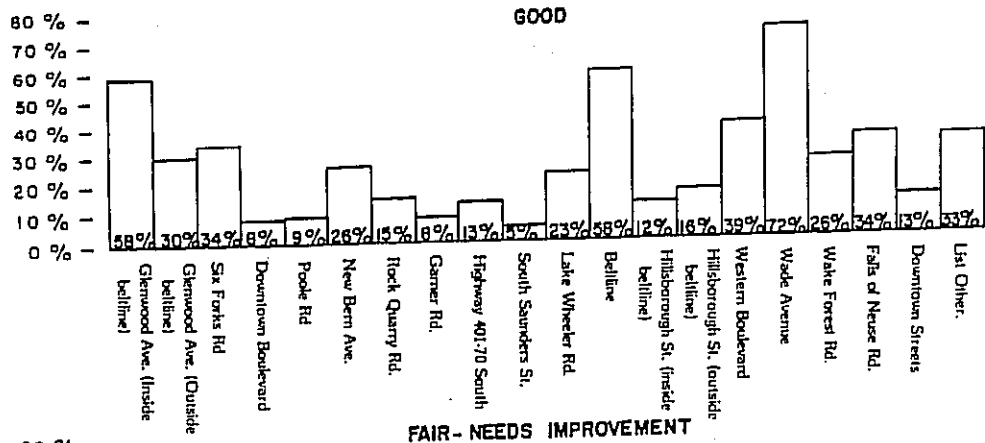




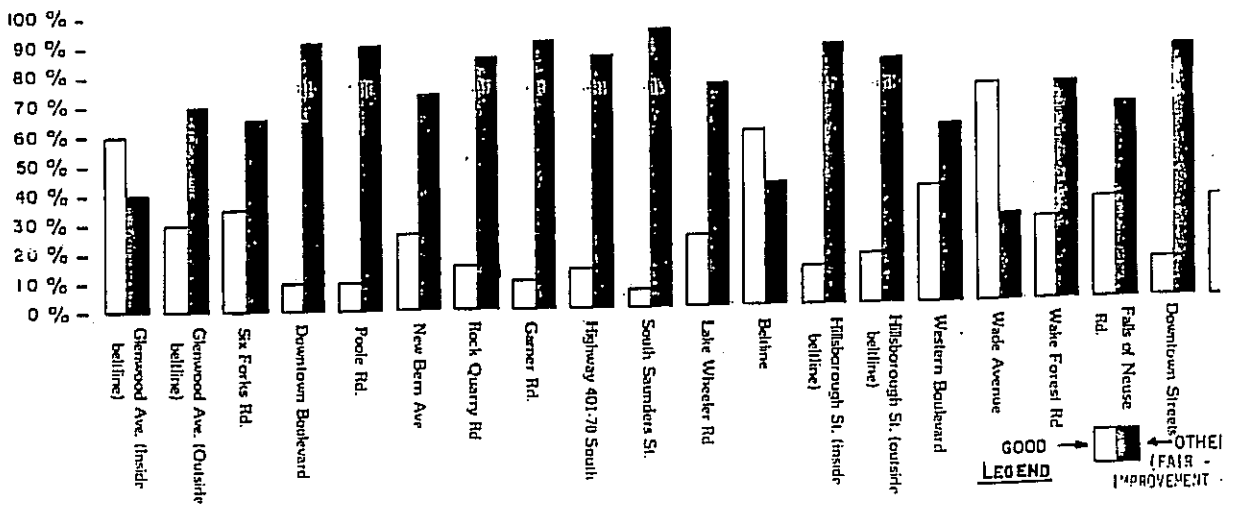


How do you rate the attractiveness of the areas  
along the following Raleigh streets?

Fair, needs  
Good Improvement Bad Don't  
know

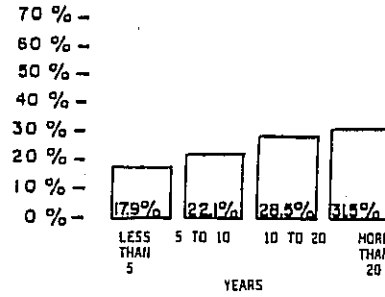


COMPARISON  
(GOOD TO OTHER)



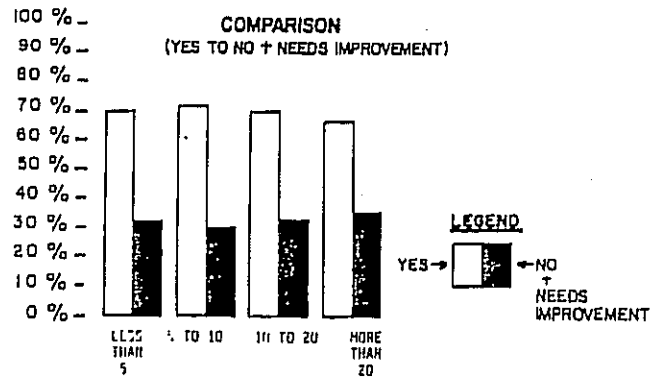
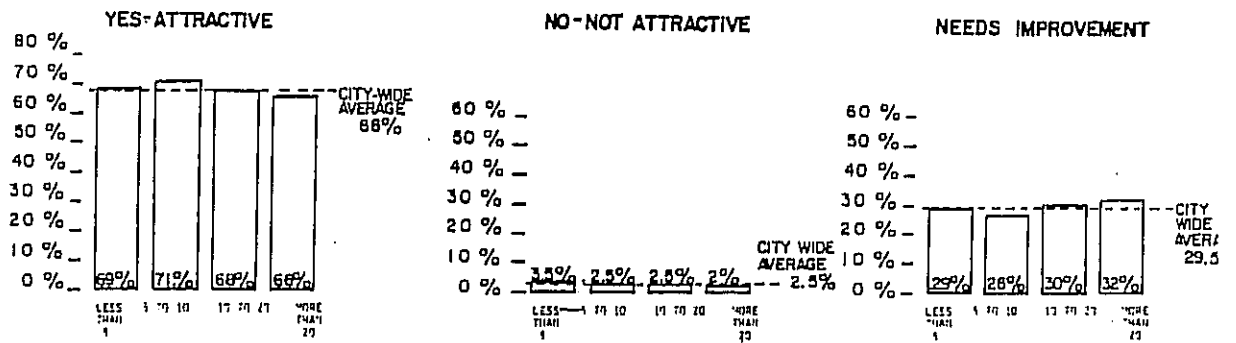
How long have you lived in Raleigh?

Less than 5 years \_\_\_\_\_ 5 to 10 years \_\_\_\_\_  
 10 to 20 years \_\_\_\_\_ More than 20 years \_\_\_\_\_

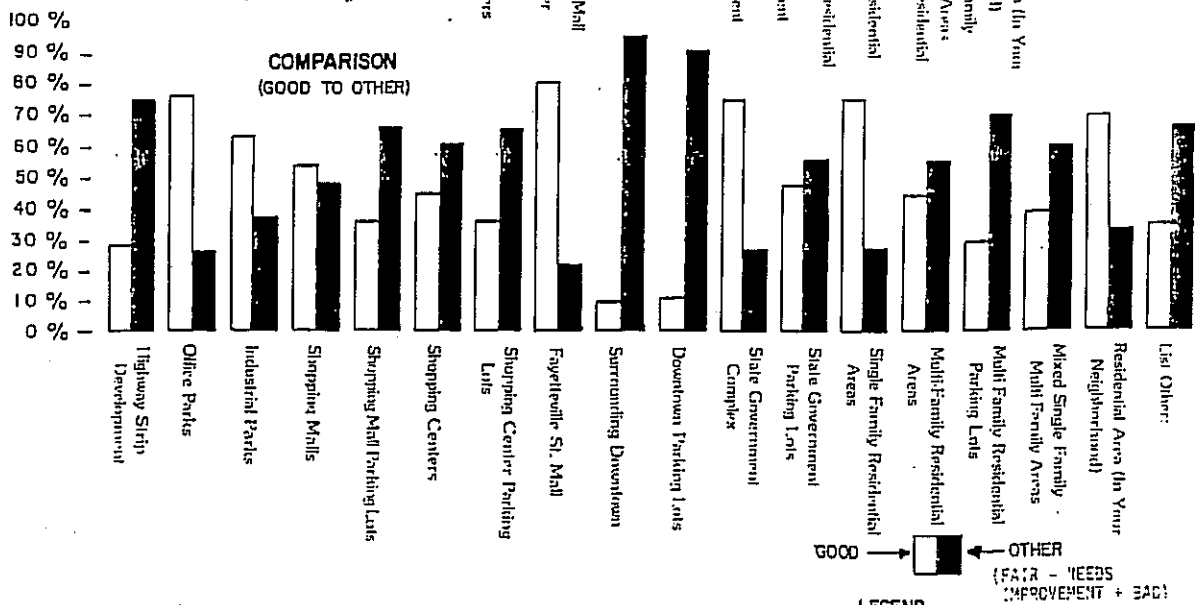
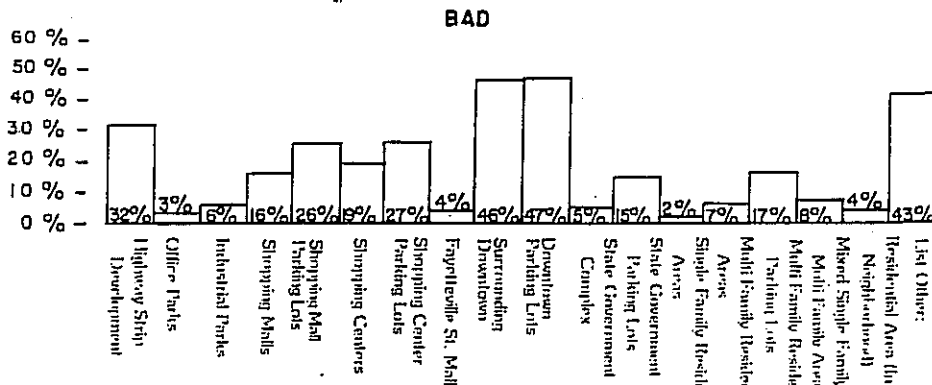
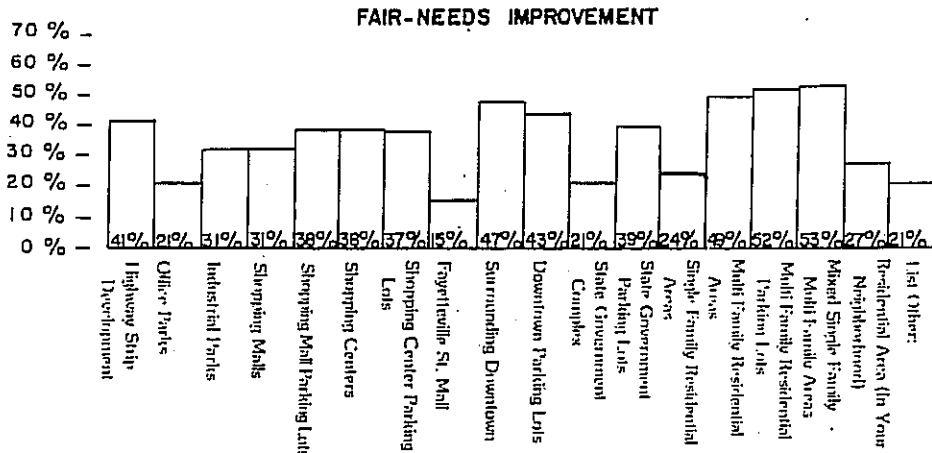
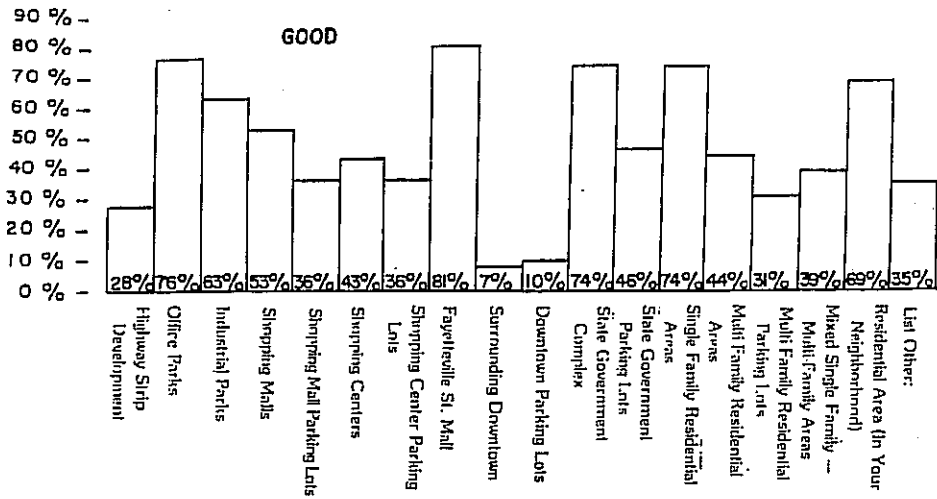


Do you consider Raleigh an attractive city?

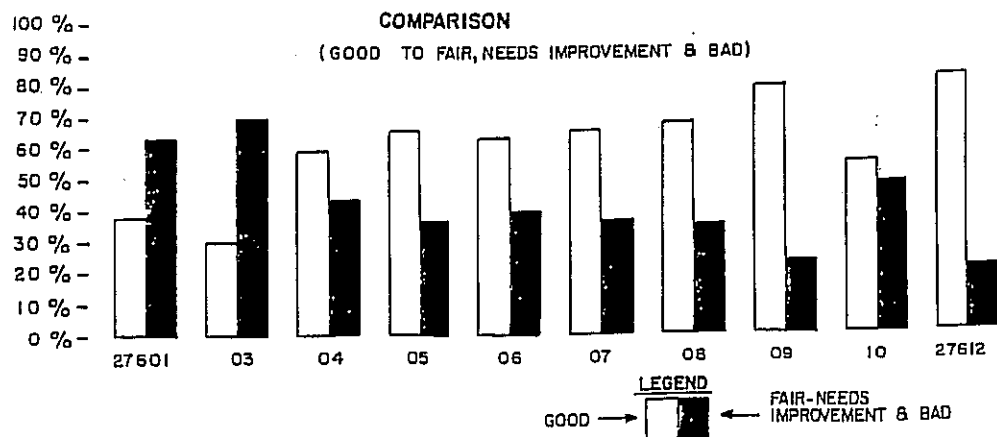
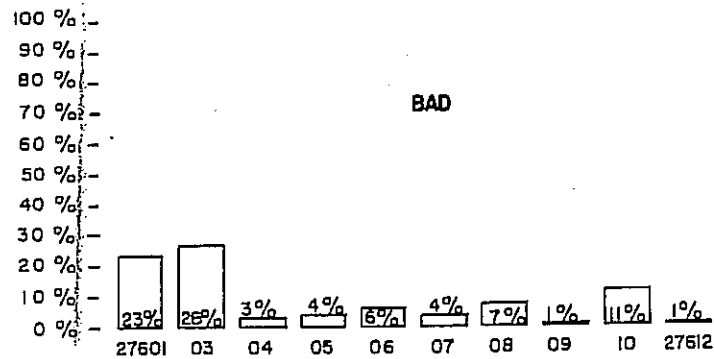
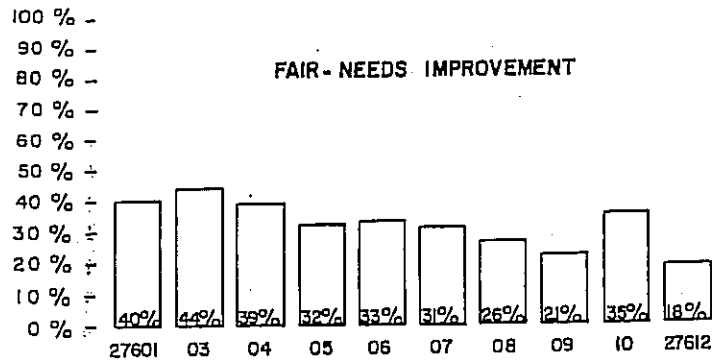
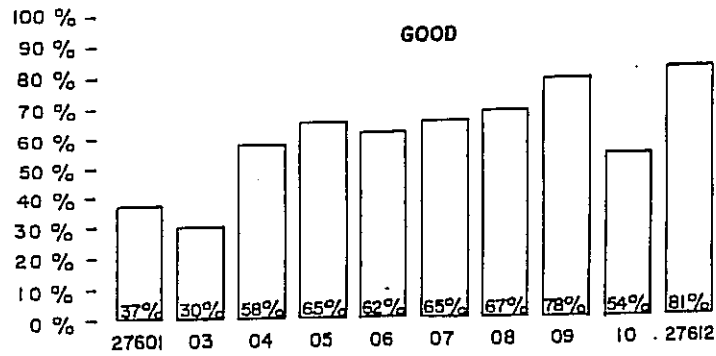
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Needs Improvement \_\_\_\_\_



Fair, needs  
Good improvement Bad Don't know

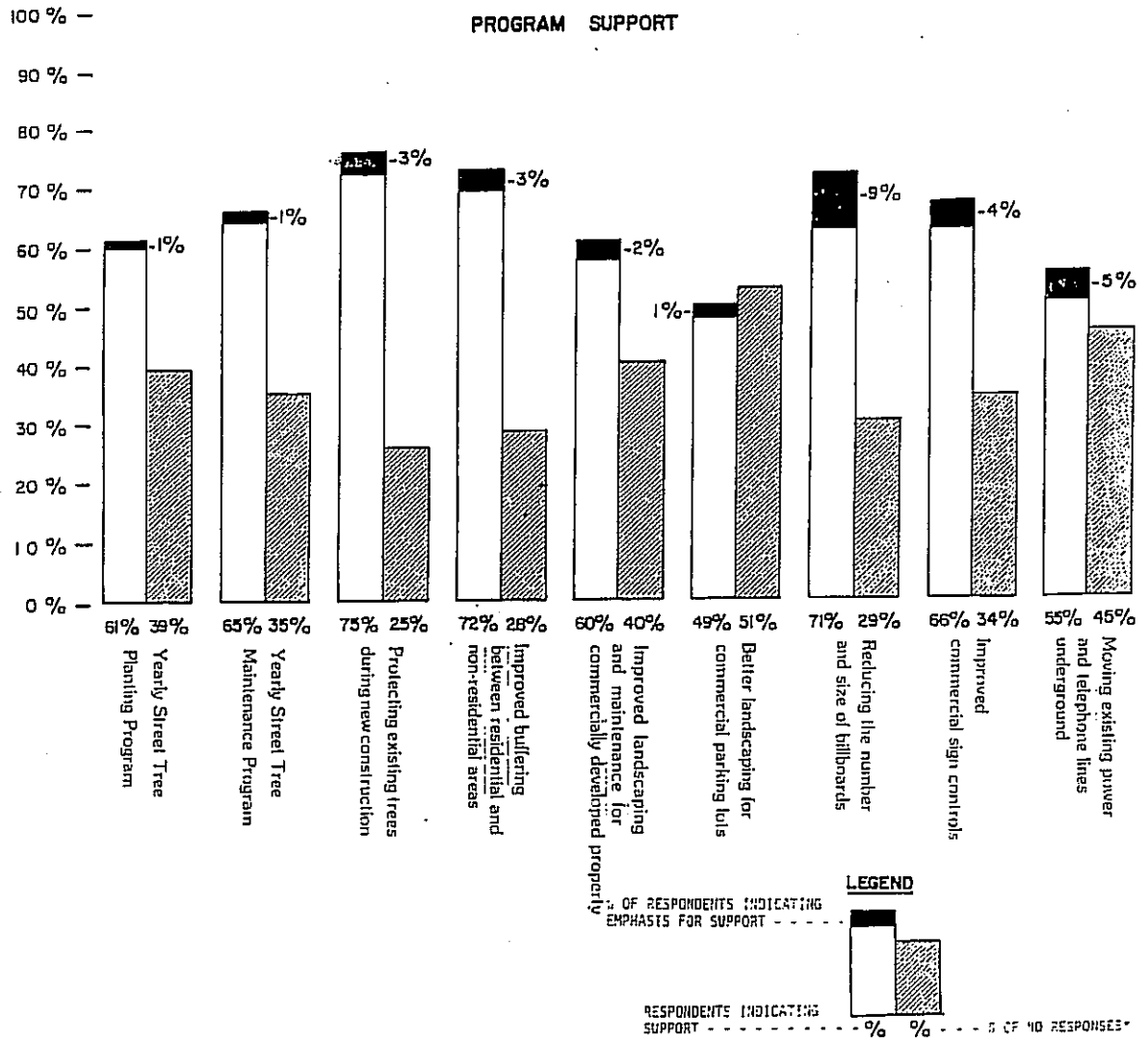


How do you rate the attractiveness of  
Residential Area (In Your  
Neighborhood)



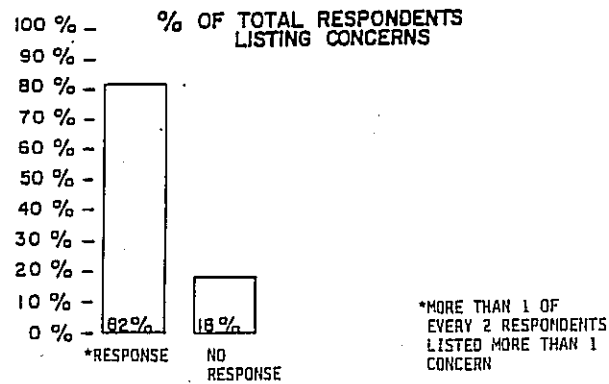
What programs would you support to improve Raleigh's appearance even if this may mean some cost to the City or new regulations:

- Yearly Street Tree Planting Program
- Yearly Street Tree Maintenance Program
- Protecting existing trees during new construction
- Improved buffering between residential and non-residential areas
- Improved landscaping and maintenance for commercially developed property
- Better landscaping for commercial parking lots
- Reducing the number and size of billboards
- Improved commercial sign controls
- Moving existing power and telephone lines underground



MANY NO RESPONSES TO THIS ITEM INDICATED THAT THE NO RESPONSE WAS BASED UPON A DESIRE THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE ITEMS NOT BE TOTALLY FUNDED AT TAXPAYER EXPENSE. THIS INDICATION PRIMARILY CONCERNED THOSE ITEMS WHICH IMPROVE PRIVATE PROPERTY AND UTILITY LINES.

What is your greatest concern about the appearance of Raleigh? \_\_\_\_\_

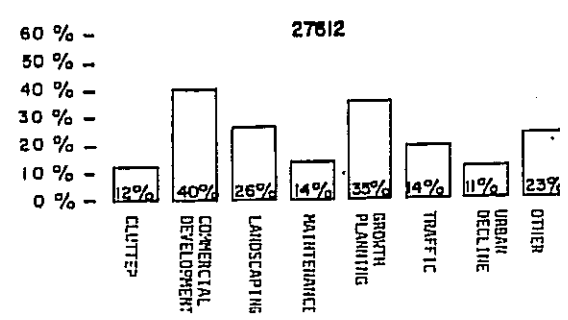
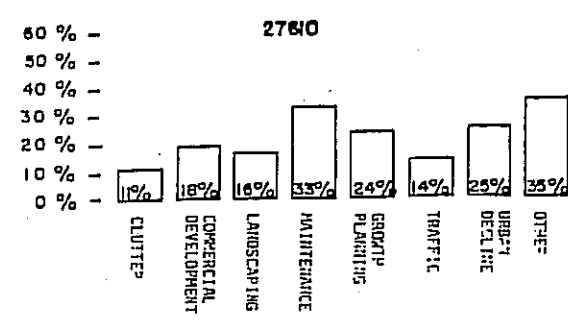
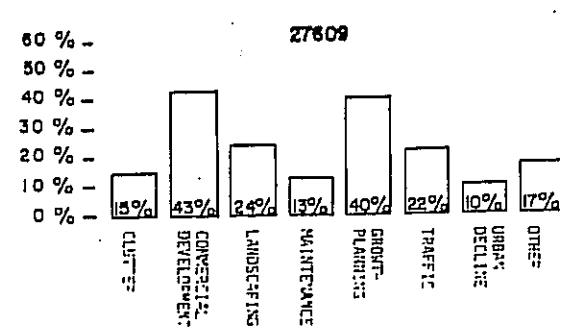
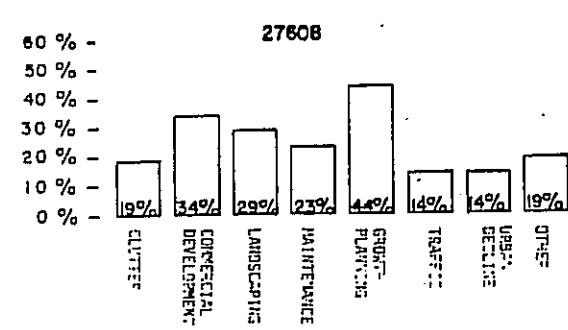
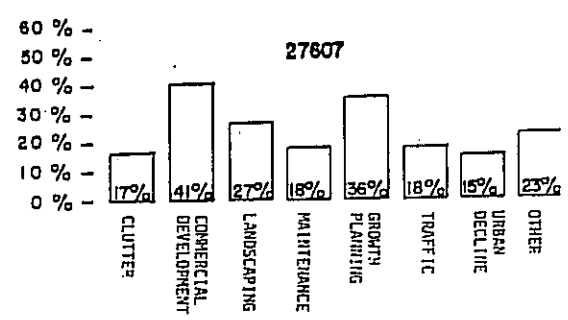
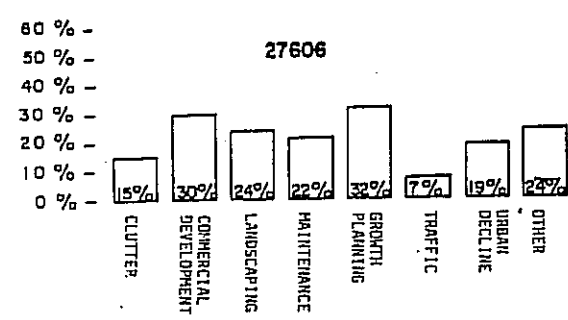
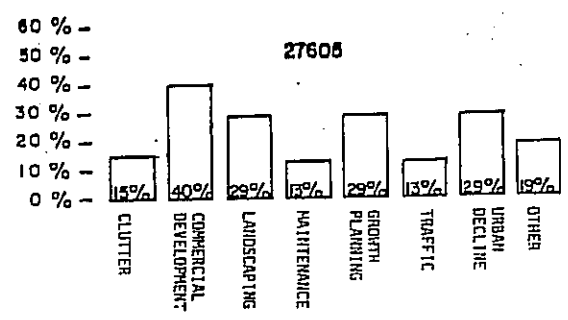
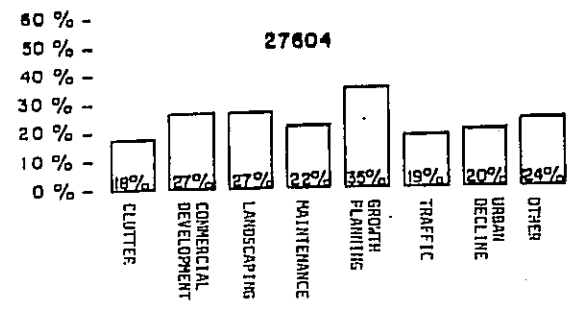
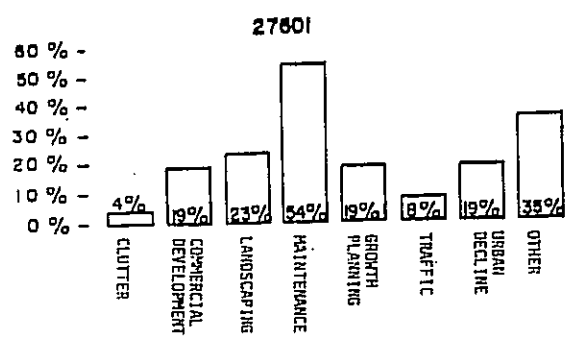


#### GREATEST CONCERN RESPONSE BREAKDOWN

- 1 in every 2.7 respondents listed COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT issues such as too many shopping centers, shopping centers too close together, unattractive strip and commercial development and a need to improve major thoroughfares leading into the City, etc.
- 1 in every 2.7 respondents listed GROWTH AND PLANNING issues such as growth uncontrolled, growing too fast for existing regulations, need for better zoning controls, adjacent zoning incompatible (i.e., single-family residential adjacent to multi-family, commercial, industrial, etc.), too dense, development uncontrolled, losing that "Old Southern City flavor," etc.
- 1 in every 4 respondents listed LANDSCAPING issues such as too much greenery being removed, need more concern for trees, greenery, etc.
- 1 in every 5.3 respondents listed MAINTENANCE issues such as litter or trash in streets or lots, need to clean streets, cleaning streets, leaf pickup, larger trash or junk on lots, old cars, appliances, miscellaneous unfinished materials, general need to keep areas around buildings (both residential and commercial) clean and maintained, etc.
- 1 in every 5.6 respondents listed TRAFFIC issues such as too much traffic, traffic congestion and other similar issues.
- 1 in every 6.7 respondents listed CLUTTER ALONG ROADS issues such as too many signs, billboards, utility lines, poles and other visual man-made clutter along thoroughfares.
- 1 in every 6.7 respondents listed URBAN DECLINE issues such as decline of older neighborhoods, rundown unmaintained older buildings, need for downtown revitalization and protection of older areas, both residential and commercial, and other related issues affecting older cities.
- 1 in every 4.5 respondents listed OTHER issues such as neighbors' cars parked all over yard, lack of maintenance and concern for rental property, incompatible infill development, parking on sidewalks, crime and social issues and many more.

What is your greatest concern about the appearance of Raleigh? \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: MANY RESPONDENTS LISTED MULTIPLE CONCERNS



These are typical responses taken from the survey question:

1. Do you consider Raleigh an attractive city?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Needs Improvement \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

WHY (QUESTION 1)

GOOD

Trees, landscape, homes, cleanliness  
Greenery preserved  
Houses, Sts, landscape maintained  
"Born here"  
Trees. Homes well cared for  
Wide Sts, Park Dept, neighborhoods.  
Trees, older neighborhoods, not as  
much heavy industry  
Beautiful  
Parks and woods  
Concerned developers  
Light industry, Govt, Univ, Environ-  
ment  
Trees, newer areas  
Trees, Design & age diversity of  
structures  
Clean, small, no dirty factories  
Parks, trees, hills  
Terrain, trees, etc  
College campuses, Capitol ground  
landscaping & tree lined streets  
Clean. Plenty of natural areas  
Planned growth  
Trees, green natural areas  
Wooded areas, tree lines streets, etc  
Green spaces, trees, cleanliness  
Trees, parks, etc  
Lots of green  
Because of all improvements  
Clean, trees and hills, new Bldgs  
Good planning  
Trees and flowers  
Lack of "dirty" industry  
Winding Sts, trees, landscaped homes,  
greenways  
Trees and landscaping  
Trees, park areas. Big city atmosphere  
with little town Ambiance  
Greenways, parks & some residential  
Trees, maintained lawns, greenery  
Parks, restored areas  
Clean, not too large  
Trees and parks  
Trees, clean, no heavy industry  
Parks, planting  
Plantings  
Preservation of trees  
Park like atmosphere

BAD

Too many billboards & shopping centers  
Trash unbagged and tree limbs  
Downtown void of life & beauty - depressing  
Strip commercial, signs, facade, etc.  
Older areas around capitol  
South Raleigh (need remodeling, landscaping)  
Areas could be more aesthetically pleasing  
All cities have areas that need improvement  
More stringent Bldg codes - better landscaping  
Strip development, unneeded shopping Ctrs / Offices  
S. Wilmington St., and billboards  
Major entranceways, new development stripped  
Billboards, poor areas, bad streets  
Losing the human scale, Safety  
Random mix of homes and business  
Congested traffic  
We haven't driven developers out of town  
Hillsborough St needs cleanin' up around NCSU  
Spot commercial areas mixed with residential  
Condos. - too many with same style  
Care of roadsides and parks  
All areas deteriorating or destroyed by poor  
zoning  
Strip Dev. Also Hillsborough St disgrace as  
entry to city  
Rental property in South Raleigh  
Getting too big  
Black & white areas of rental housing  
Roads need paving  
Clutter, signs, haphazard zoning (ie strips)  
Billboards uncontrolled. Sts always under repair  
European cities better, more gardens  
Commercial Dev. too fast, unplanned and haphazard  
Entranceways, downtown (excl Mall) and slums  
Traffic and zoning (a disaster)  
Strip development  
Too much destruction in name of progress  
Entranceways - Downtown & North Blvd  
Clutter. No planning. Traffic nearly hopeless  
Shopping Ctrs and strip development  
Trees being cut down  
Too many strip shopping centers  
Environment deteriorating  
Signs on major entranceways  
Barren-unkept areas among many major streets  
Trash on lawns and roads  
Natural beauty being destroyed by rapid growth  
Run down areas  
Rental areas  
Commercial development  
Bad zoning  
Uncontrolled strip growth - poor planning -  
vested interest by city council members  
Losing ground fast  
Very attractive until all this building started  
on every corner  
Trash not picked up often enough  
Needs more revitalizing. Poor kept neighborhoods  
Main thoroughfares into city are a blight of  
fast food joints, industrial eyesores, & non-  
existent landscaping  
Too much commercial development - ie shopping Ctr  
Inner city rehabilitation  
Entranceways.  
Not clean  
Old Bldgs in downtown area should be demolished  
Shopping Ctrs  
Some streets need paving badly  
Many commercial areas starting up to look like LA  
Street maintenance  
South & East Raleigh needs more attention  
Trash on streets  
Downtown trees getting scarce



These are typical responses taken from the survey question:

6. What is your greatest concern about the appearance of Raleigh? \_\_\_\_\_

The strip zoning of our major arteries into shopping centers (to many) and office buildings and the proliferation of billboards.

The lack of foresight on the part of the city power structure which makes them fail to realize that property ownership is a stewardship not a license to spoil for others and for the future. Also, given the foresight, I question their courage to act.

Allowing business signs and businesses in residential areas.

Commercial development is being allowed to spread out too much along our main roads. It should be concentrated in well planned areas.

Zoning - infringement of realtors on private citizens' property. Can't improve appearance as long as situation exists.

I love the phrase "Raleigh - the park with a city in it". I want all sections of Raleigh to fit the phrase. I remember from a song "...they paved paradise and put in a parking lot..." and don't want that for Raleigh. I want Raleigh to be remembered by anyone who comes here as living, green and beautiful.

Urban sprawl. As a native of Raleigh, I am saddened by the rapid decline of Raleigh's "small town" appeal and regional identity. Welcome to "Newark" folks. (It won't be long.)

Proliferation of "Bragg Blvd" look on some major thoroughfares..too much traffic and too much commercial development.

The ever increasing appearance of glitter and glass and tin and high-priced trash in commercial - government - institutional - office construction.

Bad looking poorly built apartments. Commercial buildings taking prime land from residential.

Strict enforcement of zoning and less rezoning to development interests esp. in low-density residential areas. Unabated unplanned urban development.

The greedy developers seem to think the only thing a piece of ground is good for is to cut down all the trees, plow up all the grass and build something on it or cover it with asphalt.

Uncontrolled growth. Builders have upper hand. City needs to assume leadership.

Greed vs beauty.

Poor planning leading to more and more strip development. Proliferation of mostly unneeded shopping centers.

Excessive, poorly planned commercial and industrial expansion at sacrifice of natural and residential areas.

Non-existing coordination of traffic flow planning and development.

Cheap buildings - no trees. Rape of land by new construction.

Congested streets and pot holes in the roads.

Overdevelopment of commercial property at the expense of losing beautiful wooded areas - increasing traffic and congestion - I lived in San Jose Ca 7 yrs. I'd hate to see us do to Raleigh what happened there.

There is too much strip zoning and too many shopping centers. The City Council is too pro-building.

Strip development, unplanned growth and traffic control failures.

Too many unnecessary shopping malls that pollute the appearance. Billboards along major streets are ugly. Can't we do with less billboards.

The appearance problem in Raleigh is the God-awful traffic.

Uncontrolled development! Anyone with bucks and political connection can build anything anywhere they want. There's shopping center congestion everywhere.

Billboards - overgrown lots - run down Bldgs - utility Co. digging up roads (many times right after a road has been resurfaced)(Also include water and sewerage). Plan perhaps all such service between sidewalk and road bed.

Too many apartments in residential areas.

1 - Developer blight 2 - abandoned buildings 3 - Destructive and poorly planned traffic patterns 4 - continual overthrow of protective zoning by City Council and Bd of Adjustment.

That in its rapid growth it will lose its neighborhood character....

Stick to a plan of design for building commercial areas (zoning). Stop crowding residential and commercial....

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE  
QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT

Prepared by

THE CITY OF RALEIGH APPEARANCE COMMISSION  
AND  
THE CITY OF RALEIGH PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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